terracotta sutras

arun sharma

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To

'Anannya'

A reminiscence sings
Walter Whiteman

Foreword

For Arun Sharma it was the fulfilment of a mission visiting the Terracotta Temples. As he roamed about the pulverised pieces of art, the mystic in him came alive. These poems are the fruit of that mystic experience.

"All the innocence of love
all the prayers of desire
imprisoned in the baked decorated
          tiles of terracotta temples
helplessly wait for the mystic touch
          to come alive
like the dance of the majestic birds. . ....
(No. 5)

The search takes the poet to every sacred corner of the temples. They remain the eternal witnesses to their festive days when the "murals danced" in their glory as well as their sad plight listening to the "lost voices in the dark wells." And the poet pleads : 'pray never mock their helplessness, they ask for compassion.'

Simply described, Terracotta Sutra are songs of love. While sutra is the thread that remains hidden in the garland, it unites the many flowers. These

songs unite the readers with mother Nature; they also unite pilgrims among themselves. They give this message : it is union that is the need of the moment, our world today stands in need of union with God, Nature, other people and with oneself.

Anyone who is familiar with Arun Sharma's writing will welcome the Terracotta Sutra. His style is simple and appealing. Through the pages of this book you will get visions of 'sad lakes', 'melancholy fields', 'nupurs of raindrops' and 'dolorous silence'. All these images put together render us this realization : truly, this man is a mystic. He is the inspirational force for men of goodwill

Deeply concerned with the crisis of our age, the poet unveils to us people uprooted worldwide because of inner conflict, ego and civil disorder. He challenges the readers to stop being passive spectators of the age and to work hand in hand for harmony and reconciliation. In the context of the troubled times in our country, this book of poems becomes more relevant.

The poems are remarkable for their candour, their courage and faith. The poet's faith in humanity is irrevocable. Mankind is moving in the forward direction. We learn even from our mistakes. The newness of belief defined and described in this book is freedom and fellowship, the markings

that lead us to the Ultimate Truth. To chant these in a rhythmic, repetitive manner is a pilgrimage, walking with the poet and in company with other seekers of Truth. The search must go on till the truth sets us free.

Hence, here is a book to read over and share with others These poems awaken us to the Reality which lies beyond words. "Much is left unsaid", cautions the poet. He pushes us to wisdom's gates There we contemplate the mystery of love and in wonder exclaim with the poet : "what greater things can be said about love ?"

Abu Road — Cyriac Muppathyil
15th May 1993 — (Doctor Sacrae Theologiae)

1

The song of the mystic gaze
hide it in the prayers of silence
where even the breath cannot reach it
lest it is memorised by the river breeze
and taught to the pebbles and the trees
and carried to the distant seas
to be lost on the lips of million waves.

2

Freed from the eternal curse just for a day again
came the severed souls to play hide-and-seek in ages
in the temples, witness to their festive days,
again reverberated with their laughter
the murals danced in their glory
till the butterflies took them away
to the land of sorrows.

3

The sad lakes and the melancholy fields
filled the void of the azure sky with their tears
the breeze stood still naked in the sunshine
waiting to be clothed at the temple steps
with the diaphanous pignoir of fragrance divine
of those promises the soul shuddered to make
of those sacrifices it refused to take.

4

Standing on the hillock the search was for the parakeets
who would have repeated the sutras with the drum beats
while the soul sanctified in the fosse of flames
would have lost itself at the feet of the altar
listening to the scriptures of the primal love.

5

All the innocence of love, all the prayers of desire
imprisoned in the baked decorated tiles of terracota temples
helplessly wait for the mystic touch to come alive
like the dance of the majestic birds
flights of chirpy sparrows, call of thrilled calf
pulsating beats of the drums
holy sounds of the Dakshinavarti conch.

6

It was like homecoming in the shadows of 'RASHA MANCHA'
alas the dilapidated walls took the breath out
and the feet hurriedly retraced their path
while the yearning soul bled in the MANCHA courtyard
never to see any RASHA ever again
albeit the moonlight will visit it every month to weep
and the seasons will return to sob
at its steps.

7

The dolorous silence refused to understand
the sorrows of the helpless reticence
and the desire remained bandaged
no wound could ever be seen
and the occult kiss ever so keen
remained alert to heal any exposed wound
left by the nostalgia of the seasons.



The highways in the eyes took the soul to the mountains
where lovers warmed huddled by the fireside
telling each other the fairy tales of love
of the gypsy and the princess of the red mountain.
Oh do not close the eyes
do not stop the flowing innocent seismic laughter
the soul will freeze in the chill.

9

The nuances of the smiles could not be deciphered
the thorn wrapped flesh kept on burning
as if poisoned by ATROPA-BELLADONA
but the saviour came in the guise of the confession
the scorching heat of the desert sun
froze in the blanket of snow flakes
and the desire now waits for Santa Clause.

10

To Kiss even the finger tips was forbidden
there the soul was still sacrificed
yet it was a relief to know
that was the only ablution
only sublimation, only salvation,
from the deafening silence offered by the eyes
till the hand stretched to touch the hand
fingers searched for the face.

II

How helplessly the sad gaze cried —
Oh stranger now how *will I survive :*
The mute pathos of the vermillion dreams
throttled the voice of hymeneal epithalamium
while the walls cruelly stood cold unmoved
preventing any one to come for rescue.

12

Frantically the thoughts searched the instructor
who will teach the lesson to forget
but each memory of the season and sunshine
and visions of the red sand and violet evetide
stirred afresh
volcanoes, earthquakes and hailstorms.

13.

The surging grief, the loneliness
a bamboo leaf severed from its tree
a hole note lost in wilderness
memories taking birth to torture
the lone song hovering over the weatherbeaten rock
searching for the lips that sang it in the winter sun
the ears so lovingly heard it in their siesta.

14

The sands of the dry riverbeds
will be washed away by the rains,
the names written in the registers
will be eaten up by the termites
but the fingers will burn all day and night
from the touch there won't be any respite.

15

No Soul can ever break its tether
handed to each by destiny with indifferent fervour
how then the stare could sustain the arduous day
it had to sleep like the lilies folding their petals
to suffer the dreams of
love, lust and sacrifice.

16

The dusty track that reached the river
passed through the rocks where burned the pyre
of the throttled love
for whose phoenix the prayers wait
to resurrect and return with its lyre
to complete the unsung serenades.

17

The violet dreams and the pink desires
glowed like a million sapphires
lighted brightened the gypsy caves
again the rays danced on the waves
then came the evetide with the call to part
leaving the yearnings under their wounds to smart.

18

The female rhythm of that pulsating love
filled the skies with throbbing loveliness
the quivering rays touched the songs
creatively burning them
awestruck they lost their voice
the rainbow fiesta became their nightmare

19

The moonlight abluted with sandle spa
in its anklet the chime of tuned Sitar
gently touched the restless soul
reminded it of the moist eyes' kohl
it lost its calm, it lost its sleep
perhaps the eyes began to weep
caught between the scylla and Charybids

20

The ennui of the pregnant clouds
the migratory birds oblivion of the surging storms
preen in the warmth of autumn sun
with wings of swift hopes
filled with mirages of pilgrimage
feverish and restless.

21

The song has become a lovesong
the love has become a rainbow
the pilgrim soul can no more stay in this tavern
do not snatch the language from its eyes
it has passed a restless day
craving to read the psalms of love
let it read them in the vacuity of this night
dark as the loosened cascade of tresses.

22

Dreams are the poeme of the gypsy
read them for the eherished love
it is hidden in their fragrance
the fragrance of flesh and blood
the fragrance of joy and sorrow
pray never mock their helplessness
they ask for compassion, they seek mercy
protect them.

23

Bougainvillaea, sunflowers and dahlia
dry ponds, red sands and naked men
all the visions come back like collage
but what stays throughout are the sad eyes with their a
for the sin of loving for the sin of being loved
thats their ecstasy, that's the despair
crimson dreams, asphyxiating nightmare.

24

With every step the poem took its form
today it waits to burst into its song
to dance with the NUPURS of rain drops
on the lips of the rays in the arms of the breeze
on the breast of the waves in the soul of the trees
alas it fears of losing its time
without the beady laughter's chime

25

Super desires, super dreams and superman
entered the portals of loveland
it was *nothing short of suicide pact*
one must have prepared who thought to join them
for the journey through the icy highweys
foggy days and howling nights,
love never comes to those
who fear to burn in its cold fire.

27

Eating Eclaires like naughty children
sipping coffee like lost philosophers
all the attempts were to confess love
roaming in the wilderness of terraeota
searching for the lost voices in the dark wells
but the void was filled with demands
to slaughter the dreams at the altar :
the steps are painted with warm sticky blood.

26

The sad face in moist palms
the maroon KANCHEEPURAM gold and silk
shimmhring in the cold mirror
the hanging tweed and taken off shoes
a still life portrait in land of no return
haunted all along the highway
like unfulfilled dreams, throttled screams
while came to comfort the frozen eyes
dont cry, dont cry.

27

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28

The moments of togetherness return to question
as they caress the desire
like lyrics of the wild trees
songs of the soft, sweet winds
rhythm of the restless rustic waves
why the voices left all the dreams untold.

29

The body came alive
only because the desires wished to possess it
the dreams came alive
only because the soul peeped through the eyes
the song came alive
only because the soul yearned to listen
the life has been fulfilled.

30

The eyes are filled with stars to brighten the night
roses have grown all over to perfume the breath
delight the night
whole life is for love let it extinguish its fire over it
what greater things can be said about love
deeper, simpler to anyone
than to whisper softly
honestly
with dedication
—I love you.

31

In the sorrow heavy autumn sun
where the silence sang the parting songs
it was a secret farewell to the hidden love
by the withered twigs in the temple courtyards
scrawling in their own rustling patterns
written by the melancholy wind
for the sad moist eyes to behold
—love.

32

The beautiful toilet carelessly done
after a violent love turmoil
watched by sad lovelorn gaze
in cold room where all was left in search of word
except the lonely-sad butterfly over the terracota
a mute witness to a helpless love
frozen forever in delirious eyes. . .

33

So much is left unsaid, undone
so much is left to give
the dreams wait all night
for the spirit to come
alas the desires despair to think
after yet many many seasons
still there will be much to say
much to do and much to give.

34

How the soul shuddered to think
if perchance the time just slips
the ugly thought terrorized the prayers
in haste they made the only promise
to return if the life still breathes
or to remember forever
if the cruel death precedes.

35

Wondering souls met in the longing wilderness
the lonely moments read
the sad poetry of the purple dreams
and sang the yearning river breeze
doleful songs for the bleeding sky
accursed were the sun and the seasons
when love came laughing with SANTOOR laughter.



The incipient decay left all the trees naked
the morns shivered the eves wept the nights sobbed
the dry tear-stains became darker over the moon
the wind moaned the waves groaned
the helpless season watched enchanted
as the mystic love blossomed
in that cold forlorn meloncholy.

37

The wind howls through the naked trees
haunts the forlorn feeling of sad autumn
dreams are lost in the bamboo grove
like a rudderless boat in thick sea
lonely migrating bird in dark night :
not knowing where this love will take.

38

The stubborn love seeked for togetherness
in the drybeds of the river
over the deserted senna rocks
in the laughter of the innocent faces
alas all its search were futile
it is doomed to seasonsful of loneliness.

39

In this blazing lovefire
every life is sacrificed
what defiles the ritual
is the sad desire for futile possessions.
The echoes howl -'shame ! shame !
love is a free bird no one can tame !
moment one tries it will die.

whiff the breath that touched the face
The nd the burning trembling palms
behi led the golden virgin flame
kinc e love is no more the same
to tl ks the autumn that delivered it
it se veliness and poetry.
to lc

42

The loveliness entraps like mist of autumn dawns
that wraps the sea and vales the mountains
while the fallen leaves write the song of despair
but the hope flows from the bloody thumb impression
emblem of trust, symbol of faith
insignia of the lovely love
worn by the dreamy eyes mysteriously.

43

The dreams collect pearls pink and silver
written on each with hot bloody tears
the promises to give all that love desires
each pearl is threaded for soulrosery
for the memory to repeat the prayers and promises
to the seasons of loveliness
to the seasons of poetry.

44

do the waves
le sad soul raves
The seasons return sojourney is
the memories grow thad will take
it's not how long the nts of togetherness
nor where this loverograve.
so few are the mome
so much is there to c

45

Oh the pain is so unbearable
the stifled soul wastes slowly so slowly
in the biting, cold, abysmal despair
with so much brown and so much blank
frantic longing haunt for the chrysalis
promised by the warm, wild love.

46

Granites shiver with fear to burst into splinters
desires seek the sun that will kindle the flame
the naked trees leer, the cold wind mocks
exhausted, the hope rocks like shadow
in the waves :
Where is the touch that will calm the soul.



Dr. Arun Sharma

Arun Sharma was born on August 22, 1950 at Jodhpur. He had his education in Rajasthan, Bombay and Calcutta. He is a doctor by profession and runs a private cilnic at Mt. Abu. He has written extensively in Hindi, English and Bengali. His collection of poems, *In Search of a Song*, published in 1986 was highly acclaimed.

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